The Fool Next Door. By S. N. Ghose ONE PENNY

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR GOING TO THE ROOT.

Vol. X. No. 38. December 8, 1923. WEEKLY.

What Are You Working For?

"I have no peculiar views "on the sort of society for which I am working." The views which we who are Communists hold in common of the future of human society and the path to travel now must already be well known to you from the publications of the Communist International. "The State and Revolution" seems to me to set out quite clearly the path through dictatorship to Socialism and so to complete Communism, and I do not feel the need at present to try and add anything on this point. The kind of things that I think we in this country ought to be trying to think about are much more immediate and urgent, viz., how to unite the workers now, how to arouse a living agitation, etc.

T. C. PALME DUTT.

TO SOME OF THE WOMEN CANDIDATES.

A poem by Charlotte Perkins Stetson, entitled "We As Women," may fitly be recommended to some of the women Parliamentary candidates. An even more pointed poem would certainly fit their case. The first verses run:

There's a cry in the air about us—
We hear it before—behind—
Of the way in which "We, as Women,"
Are going to lift mankind!

With our white frocks starched and ruffled,
And our soft hair brushed and curled,
Hats off! For "We, as Women,"
Are coming to help the world!

PRISON WALLS.

(Written in Portsmouth Prison, New Hampshire.)

Prison-walls have never left me
They are with me still;
Night and day they are around me,
Even against my will.

Illness, poverty and pain,
Stab me like a knife;
Only death can take away,
The prison-walls of life!

—Edward James Irvine.

THE JESTER.

(By Jean qui Rit.)

O, Laugh with me, laugh loud:
I saw a white-faced crowd;
A body lying still.
A woman's head was bowed;
She said her son had vowed
To live, or else to kill.

O, laugh with me, laugh long:
A life is worth a song
And laughter good for men.
They knew—that pale-faced throng—
The killing had been wrong;
But he was hungry—then.

O, laugh with me, laugh yet:
Thin features, damp with sweat
And pointed—like an elf;
Eyes staring, grimly set,
A look—perhaps regret . . .
The fool had killed himself. . . .

The New Capitalism

THE NEW INDUSTRIAL ERA, by Sir Charles W. Mccara. Sherratt and Hughes.

This book is propaganda for a control of the cotton industry, which might be a pattern for the control of all large industry.

Its author advocates:

(1) The fixing of prices at each stage of production;
(2) Sectionalising of the industries so that firms are grouped as specialising in given branches of the industry;
(3) Regulation of production to meet demand and prevent accumulation of unnecessary stocks;
(4) A levy on machinery that is working, to compensate owners and operatives of machinery that is not working;
(5) Drawing up of contracts by Control Board to prevent defaulting and loss, abolition of long credit.
(6) Gathering of statistics by Control Board.
(7) Provision of reserves of raw material in case of shortage.
(8) Development of sources of raw cotton, especially imperial sources.
(9) Control Board to consist of representatives of employers and of trade unions.
(10) Decisions of Control Board to be enforced by withdrawal of labour from firms which fail to come into line and eventually by legal enactment and fines.
(11) Government financial assistance through the medium of the banks when required by the cotton capitalists Thus:

". . . the Government should back the Bank of England. . . . The Bank of England should in turn back the joint-stock banks. The joint-stock banks, knowing the special requirements and difficulties of their customers, should then grant facilities for carrying on business until the situation has been relieved and stability recovered."

The Wastefulness of Capitalism.

The wastefulness of Capitalism, the gambling with raw materials, the ruinous competition in which manufactures are sold below cost price are urged in support of this scheme to palliate, primarily for the employers, the evils of the system.

The operatives are brought into the Control Board, Sir Charles Macara says, because their help is necessary to enforce its decisions. He looks to the Trade Union leaders to assist in the scheme. He quotes, with appreciation, Mr. W. Gee, President of the Textile Factory Workers' Association, who said that a joint scheme embracing representatives of employers and operatives, would do more to stabilise industrial enterprises than anything else, and adds:

"Mr. J. R. Clynes, the well-known and highly respected Labour leader, made a statement recently with which I entirely agree. He said that the workers could not hope in their life-time to see capital supplanted by collectivism as some people contended. What he hoped to see was capital diluted with as much humanism as possible."

Sir Charles Macara comments:

"This kind of dilution is long overdue. Let us see to it that our house is in order, so that we may be able to show that our prosperity as employers depends upon the prosperity and happiness of the workers, and then we shall have made a big advance in the direction we all so eagerly desire."

Sir Charles Macara voices there the wish of innumerable people who cannot yet bring themselves to the point of accepting a complete change of system. Let us keep our private property and our private business, they say; but let us keep it without risk; let us keep it without having to admit to ourselves that our prosperity is built on the privations of others.

Capitalism with its Claws Cut.

Capitalism with its claws cut, Capitalism controlled: that is the object at which all the bourgeois politicians are aiming. They try to achieve it by one expedient and another, only to fail inevitably. Mr. Palme Dutt, the editor of the "Workers' Weekly" and of the "Labour Monthly," dismisses as of minor importance our question: "What sort of Society are you working for?" Yet this is the primary question. State controlled Capitalism will not meet the case: it will not emancipate the workers; it will not abolish classes, and bring plenty and freedom for all.

In spite of his denunciation of Bolshevism, the ideas of Sir Charles Macara are not far removed from those which are uppermost in the Government of Soviet Russia to-day, where State controlled Capitalism is now advocated as a desirable objective.

Sir Charles Macara, as a practical man, who has been concerned in the actual organisation of production, sees, however, the inefficiency of a centralised bureaucracy of professional politicians. He desires State control, but he would limit the control of the State to enforcing the decisions made by those who are concerned in the industry. As a shrewd business man he does not desire politicians in Westminster and officials sent down by them to be interfering with the business of the cotton mills; nor does he desire the industry to be saddled with the cost of maintaining an expensive outside bureaucracy.

At the same time, though he offers half the representation on the Control Board, he is hard-headed enough to see that the interest of the capitalist employer will be best safeguarded by placing on the Control Board not representatives of the workers themselves, but of Trade Union officials. He makes it plain that Shop Stewards and Workshop Councils are anathema to him.

The Menace of State Controlled Capitalism.

The evils of Capitalism are daily growing more flagrantly apparent. A steadily enlarging circle of people who are being injured by them are seeking another system. Communism presents the only real solution, and the most serious menace to its progress is the fallacious promise of a State controlled Capitalism, offering to retain Capitalism whilst robbing it of its ills.

The I.L.P. and the Communist Party (Third International), have fallen victims to this mirage, together with a host of bourgeois reformists, of which Sir Charles Macara is one.

The ideas expounded by Sir Charles Macara are widely current amongst the industrial capitalists of Germany; indeed they are largely German in origin and have been more widely applied there than anywhere else. The German Trade Union official has fallen readily into line with such schemes. On the basis of them Karl Legien, one of the most prominent officials of the German Trade Union movement, said to

Herr Hugo Stinnes, the great industrial magnate:

> "It is a pity that we did not get to know each other years ago; in that case many things in the Labour movement and in industry might have turned out differently."

Sir Charles Macara says that he has never been in favour of large profits; but whilst he would fix prices at each stage he would not prevent exceptional profits being made by special opportunity or enterprise. His main object in fixing prices is to maintain a steady sale and thereby prevent periods of bad trade. Even were his proposal to fix profits, which it is not, the thrifty capitalist could still increase his fortune by increasing the turnover on which profit is to be made. The worker, who sells his labour, and who is promised good prospects of steady employment and compensation when out of work, is to look forward to a stable wage which he cannot increase much because the personal output of the worker can only vary within a limited compass.

Sir Charles Macara is, of course, a well-known figure in the cotton industry. He has been the President of the Master Cotton Spinners' Association and of the International Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Federation. He is now President of a master cotton spinners' Provisional Emergency Committee.

There is little doubt that schemes such as he advocates will come into operation in all the great industries in the early future. Already a levy of 6d. upon every bale of cotton to pay for the development of cotton growing within the Empire is enforced by legal enactment. Already at least as much of the scheme as satisfies Sir Charles Macara that the question is settled, has been introduced into the bleaching and finishing sections of the cotton industry; yet there is no news of the millenium having arrived for the workers. In the linen-bleaching industry of Scotland and Northern Ireland Sir Charles Macara also announces that his ideas were put into practice some years ago and that fines of £2,000 were in some cases imposed upon reluctant employers.

The Exploited Planter.

That Sir Charles Macara and his Emergency Committee are working mainly for the capitalists and the precarious position in which the cotton capitalists are now placed is explained with great frankness. The fact that Capitalism always exploits and often hinders the development of industry is also clearly though inadvertently brought out.

At the inception of the industry it was handicapped by capitalist vested interests. The wool, flax and silk interests secured a law making it punishable by a fine of £5 for a woman to wear a cotton dress and making it a penal offence to bury a dead body in anything but a woollen shroud. In 1736 the wearing of cotton was permitted if the warp were of linen yarn.

To-day the planter gets 6d. per lb. for his cotton, yet English spinners paid 1s. 7d. per lb. for middling American this year. Twopence per lb. should pay all expenses of freightage, and commissions; 11d. is made by the middlemen gamblers who never handle the cotton.

When war broke out the price of American raw cotton was 7¼d. per lb. There was that year a record crop and prices fell to 4d. per lb. The planters lost so seriously through this fall that a much smaller acreage was planted for next crop. Thus, in spite of the great reduction in consumption caused by the war, a shortage was created. This was artificially increased by the cotton gamblers and the price rose to 45d. per lb.; and at a low computation added one thousand million sterling to the price of the world's cotton crop. Under Capitalism nature's bounty produces ruin for the grower: a ridiculous state of affairs!

The confidence which Sir Charles Macara places in help the employer may expect from the Trade Union leaders is founded upon experience. He points out that two Trade Union leaders served on the war-time Cotton Control Board, which allowed, he admits, of excessive selling prices being charged. These "Labour men" allowed British employers to make excessive profits; then joined with the employers in an organised short-time movement to defeat the Sully group which was endeavouring to corner cotton, the working hours being reduced from 55½ to 40 per week, and the operatives receiving two-thirds of their usual wage throughout the year. This during war-time prices, when short time meant serious hardship in the workers' houses. The Trade Union leaders also made common cause with the employers in regard to the Safeguarding of Industries Act, the Dyes Act, and the Sudan grants for Empire cotton.

The Cotton Control Board, which was set up as a patriotic undertaking to do the best for all concerned during the war, is much lauded by Sir Charles Macara; but he admits that it allowed "such excessive margins between the price of the raw material and that of the manufactured article." The cotton capitalists had an opportunity to make a harvest, and no thought of patriotism prevented them doing it: whilst the Control Board gave them every opportunity.

Cut-Throat Competition.

Since the war, however, there has been difficulty in selling cotton and owners have:

> "Gone on month after month under-selling each other in the yarn and cloth markets; making tremendous losses and dissipating the capital of their mills all over the world. . . . There has been a terrible amount of money thrown away in slaughtering stocks and taking orders at pence per pound under production costs. . . .
>
> "Naturally foreign buyers, who are relied on to purchase four-fifths of the British production, have . . . lain in wait for the surplus, which they knew would sooner or later fall into their hands, and by so doing have practically made the prices of this slaughtered stock into the ruling market prices for all export goods spun or manufactured from American cotton."

The losses are said to have been from 1½d. to 6d. per lb. of yarn sold.

Whilst this has been the state of affair amongst manufacturers using American cotton, the market for the finer Egyptian cotton goods has remained prosperous. Firms which usually spin American cotton have, however, begun turning to Egyptian, which means that in a short time the whole market will be reduced to the same level. The home market has also been more prosperous than the export; but competition for home orders is also seriously undermining the profits.

It is to save the capitalists from this result of each other's competition that Sir Charles Macara and his Provisional Emergency Committee are working.

Evading the Taxes.

Light is thrown on the re-capitalisation of cotton mills which went on like a fever during the cotton boom at the end of the war. The cause of it was puzzling to the uninitiated at the time. Why were old-established prosperous concerns applying for new share capital? Surely the dividends must fall if the shares on which dividend had to be paid were doubled and trebled. To the initiated the matter was simple: If the amount of capital were increased it would show a smaller profit: therefore there would be less to pay to the tax collector. So patriotic Capitalism evades its share of the burden of Government.

The Employers' View on Wages.

Sir Charles Macara expresses his views very frankly on wage increases. Those that were given during the war should have been given, he says, as bonuses, to come off as the cost of living fell.

Moreover he prefers that increases of wages should be given, when convenient to the employer, in the shape of shares in the employer's business, the Trade Union leaders, not the actual employees, being given the votes for such shares. This is indeed the new Capitalism which is as far as the poles apart from Communism.

OUR BOOKSHOP.

THE ANCIENT LOWLY: A History of the Ancient Working People from the Earliest Known Period to the Adoption of Christianity by Constantine. By C. Osborne Ward. Two vols., 12s. 6d. each.

ANCIENT SOCIETY; or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress; from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilisation. By Lewis H. Morgan. 7s. 6d.

THE ART OF LECTURING. By Arthur M. Lewis. A condensed manual of practical information for those who wish to fit themselves to become public speakers, particularly on economics and social science. 3s.

CAPITAL TO-DAY. By Herman Cahn. A study of recent economic development. 8s. 6d.

THE CHANGING ORDER. By Oscar Lovell Triggs, Ph.D. A study of Democracy, of the rising tide of revolution, and of the ways in which the future self-rule of the working class will react upon literature and art, upon philosophy and religion, upon work and play. 5s. 6d.

THE DEPORTATIONS DELIRIUM OF 1920: A Personal Narrative of an Historic Official Experience. By Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary of Labour of the United States from 1913 to 1921. This book deals with the notorious deportations at the time of the so-called "Palmer Red Raids." 6s. 6d.

THE ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR. By Achille Loria, translated by John Leslie Garner. 5s. 6d.

ECONOMIC DETERMINISM; or, The Economic Interpretation of History. By Lida Parce. 5s. 6d.

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE. By Karl Marx. A history of France showing the economic forces behind the warring factions, starting with the triumph of the financial capitalists over the feudal lords in 1830, explaining the subsequent victory of the bourgeoisie over the financial capitalists in 1848, and showing in detail the events leading up to 1851 when Louis Bonaparte became emperor. 3s.

THE END OF THE WORLD. By Dr. M. Wilhelm Meyer. Tells us of the dramas of sun, world and moon disasters in the heavens, how worlds explode, collide and are destroyed; what causes earthquakes, volcanoes, mountains. We learn that all planets grow cold or are destroyed, sometimes after living tens of millions of centuries, and Dr. Meyer assures us that our own earth is in the bloom of youth, likely to continue to exist for unknown ages, while our moon is now in its decrepit old age. Illustrated. 3s.

ESSAYS ON THE MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY. By Antonio Labriola. Translated by Charles H. Kerr. 5s. 6d.

ETHICS AND THE MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY. By Karl Kautsky. Shows the origin of moral and ethical ideas; how they have changed to fit the needs of the changing ruling classes, and how the capitalist class keeps the workers in poverty and toil by imposing moral ideas on them that benefit the capitalists. 3s.

THE EVOLUTION OF BANKKING. By Robert H. Howe. 3s.

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN. By Wilhelm Boelsche. One of the best and simplest explanations of the evolution theory ever written. It contains many proofs of evolution discovered since Darwin wrote. Illustrated with pictures showing the different forms of life through which man evolved. 3s.

THE EVOLUTION OF PROPERTY. By Paul Lafargue. "Capitalist economists try to prove that capital—the form of property existing at present, is older than man. They say it must be eternal. Lafargue shows us how property actually arose and how its forms have constantly changed, from communism, to feudalism, to capitalism, and how its inevitable tendency is toward international Communism. 3s.

EVOLUTION, SOCIAL AND ORGANIC. By Arthur M. Lewis. Traces the growth of the theory of evolution from the early Greek philosophers down to Darwin, Haeckel and Spencer, and also shows how the working-class theories of social evolution have gradually won their way to the front, even among the theorists of the universities. 3s.

FEUERBACH: THE ROOTS OF THE SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY. By Frederick Engels. This book is a criticism of a forgotten philosopher, but it has a great and permanent value, since the dualistic theories of Feuerbach are from time to time revived by those who would make Socialism a Religion of Humanity. Engels shows here the importance of explaining history and current events in terms of science rather than theology. 3s.

GERMS OF MIND IN PLANTS. By R. H. France. The author shows us the dramatic experience of plants; how they feed the insects honey to reward them for carrying the fructifying pollen; how they know the law of gravity; how they bait and trap their prey. Still more, Mr. France shows us how the sense organs communicate news to the whole plant, and proves that plants possess a high degree of consciousness, and even the germs of mind. 3s.

A Review of the Struggles of the Catering Trade Employees

By W. McCARTNEY

(Late Vice-President, United Catering Trade Union).

VII.—THE "SUPERIOR STAFF" AND "LIVING IN."

The so-called "superior staff" of hotels and restaurants consists of managers, manageresses, the superintendents, head porters, book-keepers, head hall porters, reception and other clerks, head linen maids, liveried carriage attendants, visitors' valets, etc.

This class of staff walks about the hotel or restaurant with a "superior" air, attempting to imitate the so-called upper classes. They rarely miss an opportunity to impress upon the waiters, kitchen workers and housemaids that they are higher class persons than the common herd.

The proprietors encourage this attitude of the "superior" class by allowing them to work shorter hours and giving them longer holidays, better pay and food. Their meals are of the best, and are taken either in the stewards' room, with a waiter or waitress attending, or in the dining-room among the customers. What an awakening the members of the upper staff have when unemployed! They visit the agent, and are fleeced by him; they line up and take their turn in the agent's waiting-room with the common herd. They register at the Labour Exchange and sign for the unemployment dole, for they, too, are wage slaves. In spite of all their mimicry, their aping of the well-to-do, they find that the difference between them and those to whom they scarcely deigned to speak is small indeed. Slowly and surely they are realising that they ARE WAGE-SLAVES like ALL workers, and subject to the same economic conditions. They are beginning to understand that proprietors use them for their own profit, and are looking out all the while for cheaper and more competent slaves to provide them with more profit.

THE "LIVING IN" SYSTEM.

This is one of the greatest evils in the catering trade.

If the kitchen is in the basement, the bedrooms of the staff are generally right at the top of the building in small attics, with low ceilings, and hardly any windows. The meanest of beds, and not too many bed-clothes, and, as a rule, no fire in winter. The workers pile their own coats on the bed to get warmth. In summer, the heat of the sun on the roof of the attic is great, and one is kept awake half the night by bugs and fleas.

If the kitchen is at the top the staff bedrooms are generally in the basement, where rats and mice abound.

I have seen eight beds in one room with a rat trap under each bed.

All the clothing had to be locked away each night, to prevent it being gnawed by rats or mice.

A butler who wrote a book on his experiences as a butler said:—

"My employer asked me what I had done with his cartridges.

"I said, 'In my bedroom, sir.'

"He said, 'Dear, dear; take them out of there, it's too cold for them in there.'"

It was NOT too cold for the butler to sleep in.

I once was given what they called a bedroom; it was really a bed (very small) placed on a landing at the top of a disused staircase, with a door at the bottom, which one could never even shut, let alone lock.

Another bedroom I remember was next to the coal cellar in the basement under the pavement in the West End. Beautiful!

Another aspect of the living-in system is to make profits even larger at the expense of the health of human beings.

It costs practically nothing to provide these so-called staff bedrooms, but they are counted in the wages of the employee thus: "Board, food, everything found; ten shillings per week."

That may be for a porter, a chamber-maid, etc. They pay for their miserable bedroom anything from four to eight shillings per week.

It is all work, work, work, sleep, then work again, when one sleeps in. They have got you there and they mean to get all they can out of you.

One goes straight from this grand bed to work, then when they have done with you, bed again; then up in the morning and more work, till perhaps 9, 10, 11 or 12 o'clock at night—then more bed till about 7 a.m. All this for a few shillings a week and a bit of staff food, with a staff bed thrown in.

Even if you go out in the evening you have to be back in their bedrooms at the time specified by the boss.

Generally no gas is allowed in staff bedroom, but candles only, and they have to be out at the time ordered.

Perhaps the employee leaves his work at 9 p.m.; lights have to be out at 10 p.m., so he has one long splendid hour in which to [illegible] himself.

Generally the staff, especially the male staff, is not allowed to use the bath-room. So they have to go to the local baths.

I remember a servant, on being engaged, asked her mistress: "Where is the bath-room?" "The public baths are a little way up the road," was the reply.

Before I close this week's article I want to make an appeal. Will readers employed in the catering trade tell their friends and work-mates that somebody is attempting to do something on their behalf, but cannot do it without the support of the catering workers.

What can you do?

1.—Get your friends and fellow-workers to buy the "Workers' Dreadnought."

2.—Write to 152, Fleet Street, and get ALL the complete series of articles on the catering trade. (Back numbers always in stock.)

3.—If you think your conditions of work are hard, write to me at 152, Fleet Street.

Lord Grey's War Guilt

The League of Nations Union carries on an active press campaign. Some of its press communications are sent from its office, others ostensibly emanate from private sources. Here is one of the latter epistles:

124, Campden Hill Gardens, W.8,
1st December, 1923.

Sir,—With curious perversity certain sections of the Press persist in putting an interpretation on Lord Grey's speech at Bath which contradicts this Lordship's very words. Your correspondent actually quotes his statement that he hopes never to see this country involved in war and declares in the face of it that he has "announced the new war slogan." By the constitution of the League, with its principle of open diplomacy, a League war could not be started without the nations knowing exactly what they were fighting for. Also, the only occasion on which such a war could break out would be if a Member of the League broke its obligation to to keep the peace.

The record of Lord Grey's efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement before the Great War broke out makes your comment on his diplomatic career singularly inappropriate.—Yours, etc.,

L. P. MAIR.

Editor, "Workers' Dreadnought,"
152, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

A study of British diplomacy during Sir Edward (now Lord) Grey's term of office will reveal, we believe, to any unprejudiced person, that our comment was fully justified.

A CHRISTMAS SALE, CONCERT and REUNION will be held in aid of the "Dreadnought" Fund before Christmas. Contributions towards the Sale will be gratefully received and should be sent to 152, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

Spice

Germain Bertain is to be tried for the murder of Plateau, the leader of the Camelots du Roi, on December 18th.

* * * *

The manager of "L'Humanité," French Third International paper, is being prosecuted for asking French and German soldiers to fraternise.

* * * *

Young Philippe Daudet became an Anarchist and shot himself because he was ashamed to be the son of a Royalist.

IMPORTANT!

We urgently suggest that comrades should endeavour to secure new subscribers to the "Workers' Dreadnought" and that they should collect at meetings and from their friends whatever is possible. However small the sum you can collect, it will be welcomed. Send it in stamps or postal orders. The "Dreadnought" is not self-supporting: the editing and managing is unpaid.

WANTED, a copy of "Theatre Craft" (No. 8).

Workers' Dreadnought

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Our View.

John MacLean

HE WAS A FIGHTER: that is the first thought that comes to mind as one hears of John MacLean's death. One is surprised to learn that he was only 44 years of age, for he had been long in the forefront of the struggle, his hair was white and his rugged face deeply lined. He seemed a much older man; but hardships, especially hardships in childhood, age one swiftly. Again one thinks, as one recalls him: What a fighter! "Wild man" some called him in Scotland. Never daunted, he would not trim his words to escape imprisonment,, even though an army of detectives were around him. He expected persecution: he met it without flinching. Never apologising, never explaining away his words; always ready to repeat them with emphasis.

He had gathered round him latterly a big movement in Glasgow. When we saw him a month ago he was holding great meetings and seemed stronger and more confident than ever. Yet he lived the bare lonely life of an ascetic. Parted from his wife and children, by the financial difficulties which followed his dismissal from his school post, on account of his political activities, he lived quite alone, doing his own cooking and housework; a greater hardship this, for the strenuous agitator who is speaking continuously in all weathers,, than the inexperienced can realise. He was talking enthusiastically of the nourishing properties of pease brose, which in English is plain pease flour porridge, when last we saw him, declaring that "pease brose" was one of his daily meals. His tones bespoke his cheerful frugality, which was only too near to want.

His imprisonments, his hunger strikes, and that ugly thing, forcible feeding, have undermined what must have been originally a very strong constitution.

When the Russian Revolution was in its first early enthusiasm, John MacLean was appointed its representative in Britain: he was the only man known in Russia who, from that distance, could be counted on as absolutely certain to stand with the revolution. That was a big thing to say. The appointment as Bolshevik Consul was made in name only. John MacLean never had any real contact with the Soviet Government.

* * *

Mussolini and Soviet Russia

ITALY IS THE FIRST of the Powers to give a de jure recognition of Soviet Russia. This recognition by the first Fascist Government marks the fact that Russia is no longer a country of revolution and that the Soviet Government has retired from participation in the World Revolution. These facts have been obvious for a considerable time.

* * *

The Election

THE RESULT of the election is unknown as we write. The issues of the election leave us cold. The Labour, Liberal and Tory Parties have all put forward programmes which, if applied to the last comma, would leave things much as they are.

We desire a drastic and entire change: we are not working for tinkering repairs to the old system. We have no time to spend converting people to piecemeal reforms.

Liberals and Tories will follow almost an identical policy if returned, in spite of their election protestations. The general concensus of capitalist opinion will sweep them along with it in home and foreign affairs: the great factors of bad trade, the fight for markets, the rivalry with France and America will wipe out all minor differences. Vested interests, which are the real rulers of the nation, will force the capitalist parties to do their will.

The Labour Party has already shown itself very pliant in the hands of vested interests. The responsibilities of Government office would not render it less, but more so.

The only hope of change is from the pressure leading to action of the people outside Parliament.

The only way in which the return of a Labour Government could alter the situation would be by revealing to those who have built their hopes on it for half a generation that the Labour Government will make no great change, and that the reforms it advocates will prove sterile.

Persevere, comrades; the way is hard, so hard as at times to seem impossible; but something will come of it in the end. Even in our time we shall yet see great changes. Let us help to bring them.

* * *

Indian Elections

THE INDIAN NON-CO-OPERATORS, or rather the section of them which decided to take part in the elections for the British Legislative Assembly, have scored remarkable successes. The British Government, has, however, the power to refuse to accept the decisions of the Assembly and to reverse them, as it did in the case of the salt tax recently. The capitalist press here is already indicating that the non-co-operators will be prevented from reaping any benefit by their electoral successes.

Third International in Germany

The Third International has tried out in Germany the policy it recommends for this country —namely a united front of all anti-capitalist elements. The Moscowists endeavoured to secure unity with the Social Democrats of both Right and Left, whose equivalent in this country are the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party.

This unity was not achieved except in Saxony and Thuringia: nationally and in all other provinces except those named the Social Democrats refused all contact with the Communists. The situation in this respect was in fact much as it is here—the Labour Party and I.L.P. rejecting the unity proposals of the C.P.G.B.

In Saxony and Thuringia the Communists were admitted to seats in the Social Democratic Coalition Government; but the unity was of the weakest order. No sooner did the bourgeois Central Government take action against the Communists than the Social Democrats, both Right and Left, cheerfully severed connection with them. The Communists call the action of the Social Democrats treason. As a matter of fact the brief unity was merely a political convenience on both sides and was severed without regret by the side which found it inconvenient.

When the bourgeois Central Government sent troops to disarm the proletarian battalions, to suspend the State Parliament and arrest the Communists, the leaders of the Left Social Democrats, at a conference in Chemnitz (at which Communists and Social Democrats joined), succeeded in preventing the passage of a resolution declaring an immediate general strike. In Berlin the leaders of the Left Social Democrats succeeded in preventing the formation of a Council of Action.

On the refusal of the Social Democrats to resist the reaction in any way, and in particular to declare the general strike, the Third International Communists decided that they were not strong enough to act alone. Nothing therefore was done.

In Hamburg a conflict had broken out, and the Communists were resisting the police, the army and the navy. The central organisation of the Third International in Germany decided that it could not help because, it said, it was not strong enough to win without Social Democratic help. For this decision the central was bitterly reproached by the Hamburg section.

On November 10th, "L'Humanité," organ of the Third International in France, published a communication from the Third International Executive in Germany declaring the forthcoming policy for Germany. This included:

(1) Negotiations with the Social Democrats and Trade Unions for a common struggle for bread, against the Bavarian reaction, and for the general strike.

(2) Taking part in spontaneous and partial struggles of the masses.

(3) Gaining the support of the small bourgeoisie.

The Party slogans to be as follows:

(1) Payment of wages in dollars.

(2) Confiscation of stocks of great merchants and agrarians and distribution by the co-operatives and small shop-keepers.

(3) Defence of the eight hours day.

(4) Distribution of bread and food to strikers, children and the aged.

(5) Re-opening of factories that have been closed under factory Council management financed by State. United struggle against the Bavarian reaction, withdrawal of the Reichswehr troops from Saxony, raising of the state of siege.

(6) Confiscation of the fortunes of middlemen who sabotage production.

(7) Imprisonment and judgment by popular tribunal of Stinnes and other great capitalists.

(6) Suppression of the great coalition Government. Formation of a Government of workers and peasants.

All this was but a repetition of the futile tactics that had gone before.

Yet two days previously "L'Humanité" had published a statement from the Third International Executive in Germany, made to a Party Conference, which included these words:

"The conclusions to draw from the situation are first of all: that after the latest criminal treason of the Social Democratic leaders, both Left and Right, it is necessary to break definitely with them and to follow the tactic of a single party from below and on the basis of the workshops."

The policy entailed in the above statement would have meant a new and hopeful departure for the Third International; but the Executive statement issued two days later shows that the old policy of dependence on the Social Democrats and the confused reformism in propaganda are still maintained.

E.S.P.

THE GERMINAL CIRCLE. THIRD MEETING.
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19th,
7—11 p.m.
Ashburton Restaurant, 28, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.
EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS by various artists.
READINGS of their WORKS by various authors.
Music. Refreshments.
Admission Free. Silver Collection.

One of the New Voters

(Written by Richard Jefferies after the extension of the Parliamentary franchise of 1885, it is still appropriate.)

I.

If any one were to get up about half-past five on an August morning and look out of an eastern window in the country, he would see the distant trees almost hidden by a white mist. The tops of the larger groups of elms would appear above it, and by these the line of the hedgerows could be traced. Tier after tier they stretch along, rising by degrees on a gentle slope, the space being filled with haze. Whether there were cornfields or meadows under this white cloud he could not tell—a cloud that might have come down from the sky, leaving it a clear azure. This morning haze means intense heat in the day. It is hot already, very hot, for the sun is shining with all its strength, and if you wish the house to be cool it is time to set the sunblinds.

Roger, the reaper, had slept all night in the cow-house, lying on the raised platform of narrow planks put up for cleanliness when the cattle were there. He had set the wooden window wide open and left the door ajar when he came stumbling in overnight, long after the late swallows had settled in their nests on the beams, and the bats had wearied of moth catching. One of the swallows twittered a little, as much as to say to his mate, "My love, it is only a reaper, we need not be afraid," and all was silence and darkness. Roger did not so much as take off his boots, but flung himself on the boards crash, curled himself up hedgehog fashion with some old sacks, and immediately began to breathe heavily. He had no difficulty in sleeping, first because his muscles had been tried to the utmost, and next because his skin was full to the brim, not of jolly "good ale and old," but of the very smallest and poorest of wish-washy beer. In his own words, it "blowed him up till he very nigh bust." Now the great authorities on dyspepsia, so eagerly studied by the wealthy folk whose stomachs are deranged, tell us that a very little flatulence will make the heart beat irregularly and cause the most distressing symptoms. Roger had swallowed at least a gallon of a liquid chemically designed, one might say, on purpose to utterly upset the internal economy. Harvest beer is probably the vilest drink in the world. The men say it is made by pouring muddy water into empty casks returned sour from use, and then brushing them round and round inside with a besom. This liquid leaves a stickiness on the tongue and a harsh feeling at the back of the mouth which soon turns to thirst, so that having once drunk a pint the drinker must go on drinking. The peculiar dryness caused by this beer is not like any other throat drought—worse than dust, or heat, or thirst from work; there is no satisfying it. With it there go down the germs of fermentation, a sour, yeasty, and, as it were, secondary fermentation; not that kind which is necessary to make beer, but the kind that unmakes and spoils beer. It is beer rotting and decomposing in the stomach. Violent diarrhœa often follows, and then the exhaustion thus caused induces the men to drink more in order to regain the strength necessary to do their work. The great heat of the sun and the heat of hard labour, the strain and perspiration, of course try the body and weaken the digestion. To distend the stomach with half a gallon of this liquor, expressly compounded to ferment, is about the most murderous thing a man could do—murderous because it exposes him to the risk of sunstroke. So vile a drink there is not elsewhere in the world; arrack, and potato-spirit, and all the other killing extracts of the distiller are not equal to it. Upon this abominable mess the golden harvest of English fields is gathered in.

Roger breathed heavily in his sleep in the cow-house, because the vile stuff he had taken puffed him up and obstructed nature. The tongue in his open mouth became parched and cracked, swollen and dry; he slept indeed, but he did not rest; he groaned heavily at times and rolled aside. Once he awoke choking—he could not swallow, his tongue was so dry and large; he sat up, swore, and again lay down. The rats in the sties had already discovered that a man slept in the cow-house, a place they rarely visited, as there was nothing there to eat; how they found it out no one knows. They are clever creatures, the despised rats. They came across in the night and looked under his bed, supposing that he might have eaten his bread-and-cheese for supper there, and that fragments might have dropped between the boards. There were none. They mounted the boards and sniffed round him; they would have stolen the food from his very pocket if it had been there. Nor could they find a bundle in a handkerchief, which they would have gnawed through speedily. Not a scrap of food was there to be smelt at, so they left him. Roger had indeed gone supperless, as usual; his supper he had swilled and not eaten. His own fault; he should have exercised self-control. Well, I don't know; let us consider further before we judge.

In houses the difficulty often is to get the servants up in the morning; one cannot wake, and the rest sleep too sound—much the same thing; yet they have clocks and alarums. The reapers are never behind. Roger got off his planks, shook himself, went outside the shed, and tightened his shoe-laces in the bright light. His rough hair he just pushed back from his forehead, and that was his toilet. His dry throat sent him to the pump, but he did not swallow much of the water—he washed his mouth out, and that was enough; and so without breakfast he went to his work. Looking down from the stile on the high ground there seemed to be a white cloud resting on the valley, through which the tops of the high trees penetrated; the hedgerows beneath were concealed, and their course could only be traced by the upper branches of the elms. Under this cloud the wheat-fields were blotted out; there seemed neither corn nor grass, work for man nor food for animal; there could be nothing doing there surely. In the stillness of the August morning, without song of bird, the sun, shining brilliantly high above the mist, seemed to be the only living thing, to possess the whole and reign above absolute peace. It is a curious sight to see the early harvest morn—all hushed under the burning sun, a morn that you know is full of life and meaning, yet quiet as if man's foot had never trodden the land. Only the sun is there, rolling on his endless way.

Roger's head was bound with brass, but had it not been he would not have observed anything in the aspect of the earth. Had a brazen band been drawn firmly round his forehead it could not have felt more stupefied. His eyes blinked in the sunlight; every now and then he stopped to save himself from staggering; he was not in a condition to think. It would have mattered not at all if his head had been clear; earth, sky, and sun were nothing to him; he knew the footpath, and saw that the day would be fine and hot, and that was sufficient for him, because his eyes had never been opened.

The reaper had risen early to his labour, but the birds had preceded him hours. Before the sun was up the swallows had left their beams in the cow-shed and twittered out into the air. The rooks and wood-pigeons and doves had gone to the corn, the blackbird to the stream, the finch to the hedgerow, the bees to the heath on the hill, the humble-bees to the clover in the plain. Butterflies rose from the flowers by the footpath, and fluttered before him to and fro and round and back again to the place whence they had been driven. Gold-finches tasting the first thistledown rose from the corner where the thistles grew thickly. A hundred sparrows came rushing up into the hedge, suddenly filling the boughs with brown fruit; they chirped and quarrelled in their talk, and rushed away again back to the corn as he stepped nearer. The boughs were stripped of their winged brown berries as quickly as they had grown. Starlings ran before the cows feeding in the aftermath, so close to their mouths as to seem in danger of being licked up by their broad tongues. All creatures, from the tiniest insect upward, were in reality busy under that curtain of white-heat haze. It looked so still, so quiet, from afar; entering it and passing among the fields, all that lived was found busy at its long day's work. Roger did not interest himself in these things, in the wasps that left the gate as he approached—they were making papier-maché from the wood of the top bar—in the bright poppies brushing against his drab unpolished boots, in the hue of the wheat or the white convolvulus; they were nothing to him.

Why should they be? His life was work without skill or thought, the work of the horse, of the crane that lifts stones and timber. His food was rough, his drink rougher, his lodgings dry planks. His books were—none; his picture-gallery a coloured print at the alehouse—a dog, dead, by a barrel, "Trust is dead; Bad Pay killed him." Of thought he thought nothing; of hope his idea was a shilling a week more wages; of any future for himself of comfort such as even a good cottage can give—of any future whatever—he had no more conception than the horse in the shafts of the wagon. A human animal simply in all this, yet if you reckoned upon him as simply an animal—as has been done these centuries—you would now be mistaken. But why should he note the colour of the butterfly, the bright light of the sun, the hue of the wheat? This loveliness gave him no cheese for breakfast; of beauty in itself, for itself, he had no idea. How should he? To many of us the harvest—the summer—is a time of joy in light and colour; to him it was a time for adding yet another crust of hardness to the thick skin of his hands.

Though the haze looked like a mist it was perfectly dry; the wheat was as dry as noon; not a speck of dew, and the pimpernels wide open for a burning day. The reaping-machine began to rattle as he came up, and work was ready for him. At breakfast-time his fellows lent him a quarter of a loaf, some young onions, and a drink from their tea. He ate little, and the tea slipped from his hot tongue like water from the bars of a grate; his tongue was like the heated iron the housemaid tries before using it on the linen. As the reaping-machine went about the gradually decreasing square of corn, narrowing it by a broad band each time, the wheat fell flat on the short stubble. Roger stooped, and, gathering sufficient together, took a few straws, knotted them to another handful as you might tie two pieces of string, and twisted the band round the sheaf. He worked stooping to gather the wheat, bending to tie it in sheaves; stooping, bending—stooping, bending,—and so across the field. Upon his head and back the fiery sun poured down the ceaseless and increasing heat of the August day. His face grew red, his neck black; the drought of the dry ground rose up and entered his mouth and nostrils, a warm air seemed to rise from the earth and fill his chest. His body ached from the ferment of the vile beer, his back ached with stooping, his forehead was bound tight with a brazen band. They brought some beer at last; it was like the spring in the desert to him. The vicious liquor—"a hair of the dog that bit him"—sank down his throat, grateful and refreshing to his disordered palate as if he had drunk the very shadow of green boughs. Good ale would have seemed nauseous to him at that moment, his taste and stomach destroyed by so many gallons of this. He was "pulled together," and worked easier; the slow hours went on, and it was luncheon. He could have borrowed more food, but he was content instead with a screw of tobacco for his pipe and his allowance of beer.

They sat in the corner of the field. There were no trees for shade; they had been cut down as injurious to corn, but there were a few maple bushes and thin ash sprays, which seemed better than the open. The bushes cast no shade at all, the sun being so nearly overhead, but they formed a kind of enclosure, an open-air home, for men seldom sit down if they can help it on the bare and level plain; they go to the bushes, to the corner, or even to some hollow. It is not really any advantage; it is habit; or shall we not rather say that it is nature? Brought back as it were in the open field to the primitive conditions of life, they resumed the same instincts that controlled man in the ages past.

Ancient man sought the shelter of trees and banks, of caves and hollows, and so the labourers under somewhat the same conditions came to the corner where the bushes grew. There they left their coats and slung up their luncheon-bundles to the branches; there the children played and took charge of the infants; there the women had their hearth and hung their kettle over a fire of sticks.

(To be continued.)

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The Fool Next Door

By S. N. GHOSE.

He was my next-door neighbour, but I do not know as yet who first gave him the name "Fool." He was an old man—his hair was all grey, but he walked with his head very erect.

Our lane was a blind alley—behind one of those big hotels. Every evening heaps of paper bags, opened tin-cans and empty provision-baskets were shovelled off on our side. The children and the mongrel dogs of the neighbourhood would rummage among these; the "Fool" used to be there as well. He did not as a rule succeed in getting much, but what he got he would give to the youngsters. He did, however, keep the cardboard boxes for himself; out of these he made crude toys for his young friends.

All the children liked him; they called him "Grandpa"; he was always very friendly with them; he would sometimes tell them the stories of the time when he was young—how the electric tram-cars were a very new innovation, how the big hotel was first built.

When he was about eight he was a bricklayer's boy; we had heard him say how one day this bricklayer slipped from the scaffolding and fell on the pavement below—that was a terrible sight. All that remained of the man had been scattered about—mixed up with the brick-dust, the mortar, the pebbles and the mud.

We did not mind listening to the stories of the Fool nor did the children—but, then, their mothers did, and most probably it was they who had given the poor man the name "Fool."

The old man often had trouble with them; they complained about his telling creepy stories to the children.

I do not think that he always told unhappy stories, for I myself have heard him tell a lot of fairy stories as well: how God had crowned a little boy because he would not hurt the birds, how in the Kingdom of Parijata the old and the young were always happy and there were no great and no small. . . .

As a rule he finished up each of his stories with some moral maxim, which he would make all the young listeners repeat in chorus. I know a few of them—such as "My little brothers! For the sake of God we must love one another," or "My little angels! Do not laugh at the weak—God does not like that!"—and there were some more like these.

It was several months since I had been there that I came to know the tragedy of the life of the "Fool."

They say that it happened in the early days of the chemical industry at Calcutta. The company directors never bother to put in the improved tanks or heaters, and in those days they cared still less. All that they did was to buy the rejected second-hand things from Germany or America. No doubt they got them cheap; but when the yield was not large, they published in the papers how the Hindu workers are lazy and why "twelve hours a day" is not so bad.

The dividends in the chemical industries have however, in spite of the Hindu workers' laziness and inefficiency, remained uniformly large. What they wanted—and even now every one of them want—is: "Produce more, or for less, so that we will get richer, and all the world would become happy."

I was in France in 1917 in the Labour Corps, and that opened my eyes. A French worker, even if he is paid a hundred times more, will never work under the same conditions as we do; he simply will not take such risks. Of course, I don't work in the chemical factories now—but then, the "Fool" did, and that is how the calamity came to him.

They say he had two sons, whom he himself had brought up; their mother had died when they were very young. The old man had no other relation in this world.

He had his two sons—all used to work in the same chemical factory. That was somewhere in Howrah, over the other side of the Ganges. It has now been removed further up the river. I have sometimes passed it by in the steamers, and everyone can see it is a nuisance enough over there now, and in those days it must have been a dangerous affair—so near people's homes.

The "Home Rule" party people began their factories much later; somehow or other they did not like the factory where the Fool worked; they made a lot of fuss.

Every evening some of their spekkers would come up and tell the workers how dangerous it was to be sweated in a factory owned by the foreigners, how it was not hygienic to work long hours in the factory where there is no proper ventilation,, how everything would be all right if they get "Home Rule," how the workers themselves ought to protest against the "foreign exploitation," and a lot of other things as well.

One day an elderly man with big horn-rimmed spectacles came up there. He was a professor of chemistry; maybe that is why he spoke for hours that evening. They could not make anything out of his speech; he was worse than the Home Rule people. He wanted Freedom, and then they said he talked on "Carbonisation," "Suffocating a potition," the mother Ganges, and of "Polution of potable water." Though the workers did not understand much of the professor's speech, the directors of the factory might have done, for shortly after that they received a notice from the City Corporation, and they had to shift further up.

Just before the change, the tragic incident happened to the "Fool."

It was on a Saturday afternoon. All three of them—the old man and his two sons—were working extra hours; they had to, though the eldest son was going to be married that very evening.

I am not quite sure if that is why the foreman had given them extra hours. Few people like extra hours on a Saturday, and, I can swear, not even a strike-breaker—if it is the day of his marriage. . . . But everybody is not a foreman, and these three were "nobodies"—just "unskilled hands."

There were huge tanks of acids. I don't remember their telling me what acids they were. The two sons had to watch the tanks fill up to a mark and then turn on some taps; there were always suffocating fumes over there, and the two boys had often been almost half-choked. The manager was a very clever one—he saved money on the condensers.

Their day's work was nearly done; the eldest son was moving over his plank—it was ever so narrow—very carefully; he had to be always very careful. Generally some fifteen minutes before the closing time the distillation of the acids used to be stopped so that the workers in their department might know and become extra careful—the sound of the hooter is generally so unnerving. I have heard of heaps of accidents happening just at closing time.

It was past six; still the signal of closing did not come off. The eldest son was as usual on his narrow tottering plank leaning over and watching the seething mass of acid, when all of a sudden the hooter went off. At that sudden shrill sound he tottered, lost his balance and fell headlong into that gurgling tank of corrosive acid.

His brother was near him; he rushed to drag him up, but the plank was too narrow—one could hardly keep his balance upon it, and before anything could be done he himself was in the acid as well.

A sharp yell of pain—one agonising cry—of two human beings in deadly torture went up. It was piercing enough, but very short; every one of them had heard it; it was just for a few seconds, and after that there was silence!

When the foreman and others came to examine the tank they found nothing—not even a tuft of hair, not a piece of bone or a bit of flesh. . . . There was just a tankful of acid and some burning smell, and bits of wood floating. . . .

The analyst gave the report. He told them that in that tank of acid he had found "extra amounts of phosphorus, and lime (and I think some such strange things) in such proportions as to indicate the presence of two persons dissolved in it." That was all . . . the end of the

life history of two human lives. The analyst had not heard their cry of pain—he had never the misfortune to lose children in that terrible way; probably, that is why he gave his report mechanically with no word of sympathy, no advice for future precaution, not a sentence on the extra hours. They said that a minute trace of gold had also been found, and this the analyst could not account for, but this was from the gilded wedding-ring which the elder boy had.

A week later they called the "Fool" in at the directors' meeting, where they offered him some compensation money, and they reminded him that he ought to consider himself lucky in coming across such a large sum.

Every one of the directors was angry at the "Fools" for the accident; one said that it gave a weapon in the hands of the "swines and the swadeshi-gangs"; another wondered if it might might not be the work of the anarchists: the old man might have been bribed by them and the sons had jumped in the acid deliberately. The president of the board of directors said that he did not believe in the nonsense of the workers getting married early; infant marriage, according to him, was the cause of the inefficiency of the Hindus.

The "Fool" heard all this; he did not weep—he had not cried—he simply said he did not want any money, but he wanted to know what they were going to do to prevent future accidents. Everyone was stuck dumb at this; they called him an insolent dog, and in ingrate, and he was discharged then and there.

The "Fool" came out as he was empty-handed—the poorest of the poor.

Outside the factory gate he fell down on the gravel and there he wept for hours. When the neighbours came to take him back home, they found he had become insane. . . . He only said to them, "Brothers! We must help one another."

Lessons for Young Proletarians.

GEORGE STEPHENSON.—IV.

Mine explosions were frequent in George Stephenson's day and several serious ones occurred at West Moor whilst he was employed there.

Soon after he was appointed brakesman ten men were killed by such an accident. Stephenson was near the pit mouth at the time. He had in fact just lowered one of the men. When the explosion took place stones, rubbish and trusses of hay were thrown up from the mine and, as he said, "went up into the air like balloons." He believed that the trusses of hay which had been lowered during the day "had in some measure injured the ventilation of the mine." He was already studying the question of ventilation and the properties of gases.

Explosions continued for several days and all the ditches of the neighbourhood were stopped to get enough water to put out the fire in the mines. The colliery owners lost £10,000. A huge sum in those days and doubtless recovered by forcing increased privations and longer toil upon the miners.

When Stephenson became engine-wright at Killingworth Colliery, where the workings covered nearly 160 miles underground, he personally superintended the working of inclined planes along which the coal was sent to the surface. As far as his position gave him power he tried many measures to minimise the danger of explosion from carburetted hydrogen gas, which was constantly flowing from the fissures in the roof, attempting to secure better ventilation to prevent the gas collecting and having the more dangerous places built up.

Danger could be minimised but not prevented, for the miners of those days pursued their work in the darkness with the aid of ordinary lamps and candles, the flame of which might cause an explosion by igniting the gas at any time. The phosphorescence of decayed fish skins was tried for lighting, but this, though safe, was inefficient. A steel mill, the notched wheel of which revolved against a flint, was also tried. It struck a succession of sparks which scarcely sufficed to make the darkness visible.

One day in 1814 news came to the surface that the deepest main of the colliery was on fire. Stephenson at once had himself lowered into the pit and cried to the workers assembled about the shaft:

"Are there six men among you with the courage to follow me? If so, come and we will put the fire out."

The volunteers were ready. Brick, mortar and tools being to hand, as in every mine, and in a short time a wall was built, which by excluding the atmospheric air from the point of danger, put out the fire and stopped further damage to the mine. By such acts of heroism were fortunes built for others. Stephenson was demonstrating the practical utility of his nightly study.

"Can nothing be done to prevent such awful occurances?" exclaimed Kit Heppel, who had helped Stephenson to cut off the fire at Killingworth. Stephenson said he thought so. "Then," answered Heppel, "the sooner you begin the better; for the price of coal-mining now is pitmen's lives."

In 1813, Dr. Clanny, of Sunderland, had contrived a lighting apparatus to which air was given through water by means of bellows. This lamp went out of itself in inflammable gas, but it was unwieldy and little used.

A committee of rich men and experts interested in mining was formed to investigate the cause of explosion and to devise means to prevent them. That committee invited the famous Sir Humphrey Davy to investigate the subject, and having visited the collieries in August he read a paper to the Royal Society on fire-damp and methods of lighting mines to prevent explosions on November 9th, 1815.

Stephenson, knowing nothing of Dr. Clanny or Sir Humphrey Davy, had already practically solved the problem of the Safety-Lamp. For years he had been making experiments both at home and in the place of danger: the mine. Sometimes he would be seen holding a lighted candle to the fissure from which gas was issuing and the other man would get quickly out of the way. His theory was that if he could construct a lamp with a chimney so arranged as to create a strong current, the burnt air would ascend with such velocity as to prevent the inflammable gas descending towards the flame and becoming ignited. The lamp was to have a tuble at the bottom to admit the atmospheric air and feed the combustion of the lamp.

Having got his friend Nicholas Wood, the head viewer, to make the drawing to his instructions, Stephenson had the lamp made in Newcastle. When the lamp was made Stephenson went one night with Wood, and another man, Moodie, to try it in the mine. At a place where the explosive gas was issuing from the roof a deal boarding was erected to keep the gas from escaping and thus make an unusually dangerous atmosphere. Stephenson then fetched his lighted lamp and advanced to try it at the point of danger. Wood and Moodie hung back. Stephenson went on alone. He held out his lamp in the current of the explosive gas. The flame at first increased, then flickered and went out. There was no explosion. The experiment was repeated several times, Wood and Moodie both assisting.

Stephenson introduced some improvements to mke his lamp burn better. Then a fortnight later submitted the lamp to another trial before a larger number of persons.

Then Stephenson thought of another important improvement. When burning inflammable gas the lamp was apt to go out if not held very steadily. The azotic gas which lodged round the exterior of the flame was liable to come in contact with it and extinguish it.

"It occurred to me," he said, "that if I put more tubes in I should discharge the poisonous matter that hung round the flame by admitting the air to its exterior part."

Stephenson contrived an apparatus for testing the explosive properties of the gas and the velocity of the current required to permit the explosion to pass through tubes of different diameters. Stephenson's son Robert and his friend Wood were his assistants in these experiments. Wood turned the stop-cocks of the gasometer and the water as Stephenson directed. Once when Stephenson called for more water Wood turned the tap the wrong way. The result was an explosion in which all the implements were destroyed, which, as Stephenson afterwards said, "at the time we were not very well able to replace."

By filing off the barrels of several small keys and holding them together perpendicularly over a strong flame, Stephenson learnt that the flame did not pass them. This knowledge he used to improve his safety lamp, introducing the air into the bottom of it by three small tubes. Stephenson then had a second lamp made, and afterwards a third, embodying still further improvements. On November 20th he arranged for the making of his third lamp with a Newcastle plumber, and Stephenson drew a sketch of the lamp in pencil on half a sheet of foolscap in the "Newcastle Arms." The lamp was tested in the Killingworth pits on November 30th, 1815.

On November 9th Sir Humphrey Davy had read his paper to the Royal Society: his theories were more correct, but Stephenson had been before him in finding out how to make a safety lamp. Stephenson's lamp was better than the one eventually produced by Davy.

On December 5th, 1815, Stephenson demonstrated the properties of his lamp before the Newcastle Philosophical and Literary Society.

Shortly after Sir Humphrey Davy's lamp was brought to Newcastle and the miners said: "Why, it is the same as Stephenson's." Davy's lamp was not, however, the same as Stephenson's, for Stephenson's was a better lamp. Under circumstances in which the wire gauze of the Davy lamp became red hot, the "Geordie," as Stephenson's lamp was called, was extinguished. This was proved by experiment and by actual working. In the Oaks Colliery Pit, Barnsley, in 1857, a sudden outburst of gas took place. The hewers had "Geordie" lamps, the hurriers had Davy lamps. The Geordies went out, the Davies were filled with fire and became red hot, and several men had their hands burnt. Had a strong current of air been blowing an explosion would have taken place. Neither lamp was absolutely safe. Experiments at Barnsley gas works in 1867 showed that the Davy lamp exploded the gas in six seconds, with a shield outside in nine seconds; the Belgian lamp in ten seconds, the Mozard in ten seconds, the small Clanny in seven seconds, the large in ten seconds, the Stephenson in 75 seconds. Undoubtedly the Stephenson was the best.

Nevertheless Sir Humphrey Davy, not George Stephenson, was acclaimed as the inventor of the safety-lamp, and he was presented with a public reward of £2,000, organised by the coal owners. Stephenson's friends pressed his claim to recognition and £100 was voted to him out of the same fund. Stephenson and his friends were not satisfied, and an agitation developed to recognise him as the inventor of the safety-lamp. Another public subscription was organised, from which Stephenson received £1,000 and a silver tankard, whilst the colliers of the neighbourhood gave him a silver watch.

(To be continued.)

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